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HOPES AND CHALLENGES

Africa marks 50 years of independence

African women's long walk to equality

Poverty battle: a few reasons to smile

African business fights corruption

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In poverty battle, a few reasons to smile

Despite spots of success, greater efforts are needed

By André-Michel Essoungou

Much of the recent reporting about Niger could lead readers to believe that beyond political turmoil and tragic famine, nothing else is worth the attention. Yet, the United Nations reports, the West African nation can claim a major – but underreported – achievement: in absolute terms, it is among those few countries in the world where child mortality has declined the most.

In Niger, the rate of deaths of children under five fell from 305 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 165 in 2008, according to World Bank data. And even though Niger's rate of child mortality remains high, such an accomplishment is particularly significant given the many hurdles the country faces, including recurrent instances of serious food insecurity.

Although Africa's "gender gap" remains wide, some countries have made strides in expanding girls' education and improving women's political representation.

In fact, Niger's case reflects a wider trend across Africa in recent years. Progress is indeed taking place, despite the many challenges. But more is needed to attain the world community's global anti-poverty objectives.

Ten years ago in 2000, as a new millennium dawned, world leaders assembled at the UN in New York and decided it was the right time to give new impetus to the goal of combating widespread poverty and misery across the globe. They made a solemn promise in an official declaration and identified eight objectives, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be attained by 2015. These include halving poverty and hunger; improving access to health care, water and education; providing women and men equal opportunities and protecting natural resources for future generations.

A decade later, major advances have been recorded in most parts of the world, but far more challenges remain. In recent months, two UN reports have painted a mixed picture of success and shortcomings, particularly in Africa.

Yet the positive signs are there (see page 4). "Africa has, since the mid-1990s, arguably been making the greatest progress towards the goals," writes Shanta Devarajan, the World Bank's chief economist for Africa. "The poverty rate has been declining at about one percentage point a year. There is some evidence that child mortality in Africa, after stagnating for some time, is beginning to fall sharply.... And in primary [school] completion, if you take 1990 as the starting point, the fastest progress has been in Africa and South Asia."

Another report by the Overseas Development Institute in the UK and the UN Millennium Campaign suggests that on most of the MDGs, some African countries have registered impressive progress in absolute terms. Poverty has been reduced in 76 per cent of African countries, the report finds. Eleven of the 20 best performing countries (also measured in absolute terms) are among the poorest countries in Africa.

Yet nowhere else are efforts more needed to reach the targets set for 2015. On virtually all of the eight objectives, the continent is lagging behind the rest of the world. If current trends persist, warns the most recent "UN Millennium Development Goals Progress Chart," efforts to reach the objectives will fall well short in the sub-Saharan African region.

This uphill challenge highlights the gravity of the continent's problems. Africa's proportion of poor people is larger than that of other regions. So is its share of people living with HIV/AIDS. Greater effort is therefore needed because the road to prosperity for the majority is far longer and much steeper than elsewhere. Nevertheless, as various studies have shown, good political leadership, strong accountability and adequate budgetary allocations can help overcome such objective hurdles to bring success.

Africa's hard road to the Millennium Development Goals

Sobering numbers, but some bright spots

ACCORDING TO VARIOUS REPORTS BY THE UN and other organizations, Africa is facing big challenges in achieving the world's anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The overall statistics may be sobering, but some countries are showing bright spots of progress, which are highlighted below.

Because of improvements in health care, sub-Saharan Africa has brought down the number of children who die before the age of five by 22 per cent since 1990.

GOAL 1:
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Although some African countries are on track to meet the target of halving poverty by 2015, poverty and hunger are on the rise on the continent. The recent global economic crisis worsened the situation. Based on projections by the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa is not on course to cut the rate of extreme poverty (benchmarked at $1.25 a day) in half between 1990 and 2015. There is no sign of a decline in unemployment rates or of a fall in the rate of "vulnerable employment" (the activities of self-employed workers and unpaid family workers).

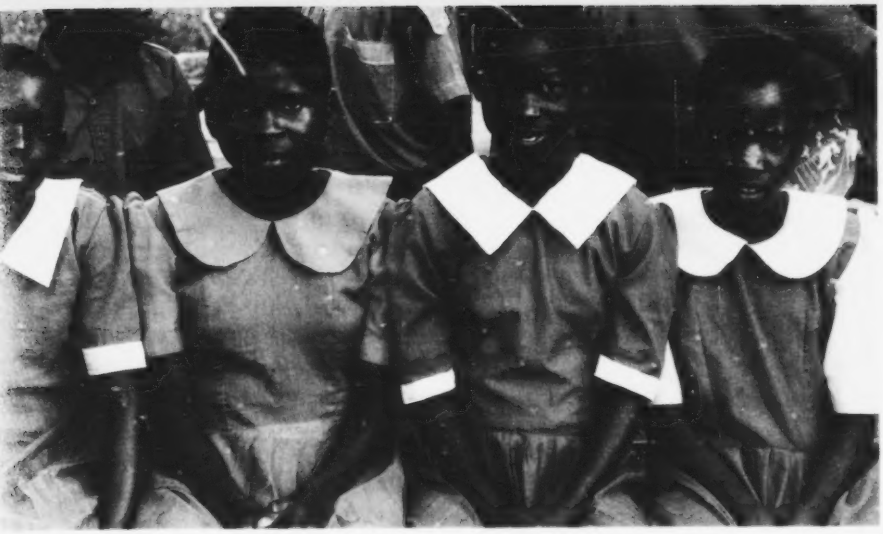
1 From 2001 to 2007, **Nigeria** doubled its food production. In **Ghana** the number of people who suffer from undernourishment fell by 74 per cent between 1991 and 2004. Through a national input subsidy programme, **Malawi** achieved a 53 per cent food surplus in 2007, from a 43 per cent national food deficit in 2005.

GOAL 2:
Achieve universal primary education

Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the world's fastest growth in primary school enrolment in recent years, with enrolment rising from 58 per cent in 1999 to 76 per cent in 2008 (an increase of 18 percentage points). Yet the continent lags behind other developing regions and the pace of progress is insufficient to ensure that by 2015 all girls and boys are able to complete a full course of primary schooling. In 2008, 69 million children were out of school worldwide. Almost half of those (31 million) were in sub-Saharan Africa.

2 In **Kenya**, the abolition of school fees in 2007 increased the number of primary students by nearly 2 million. A similar measure resulted in a threefold increase in primary-school enrolment since 1999 in **Burundi**, reaching 99 per cent by 2008. In **Tanzania**, the abolition of school fees in 2001 led to a net enrolment rate of 98 per cent for primary schooling by 2006, an increase of 97 per cent compared to 1999 enrolment rates. **Zambia** also broke through the 90 per cent threshold towards greater access to primary education.

Sources: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Millennium Development Goals Progress Chart 2010, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index_millennium_development_goals_report.htm; Millennium Development Goals Report Card 2007, www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MDGReportCard2007.pdf



Sub-Saharan Africa has made rapid progress in enrolling more children in primary schools.

UN Photo/Evan Schneider

WE CAN
END POVERTY 2015 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

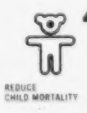
GOAL 3:
Promote gender equality and empower women

Despite some progress, gender disparities in Africa remain large, especially in education and work. The number of boys heavily outweighs that of girls in colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa. Only 76 girls per 100 boys are enrolled at that level. The gender gap is the second largest among all regions in primary school enrolment (91 girls per 100 boys) and the largest in secondary school enrolment (79 per 100). Eighty-four per cent of employed women are self-employed or work without pay within a family, as compared to 71 per cent of men.

In 2008, **Rwanda** elected a majority of women (56 per cent) to its lower chamber of parliament, the highest level of female representation of any country. **Tanzania's** Land Act and Village Land Act of 1999 secured women's right to acquire title and registration of land, addressed issues of customary land rights, and upheld the principles of non-discrimination based on sex in securing land rights.

GOAL 4:
Reduce child mortality

In sub-Saharan Africa, under-five mortality has declined by 22 per cent since 1990, making it one of the regions with the largest number of reductions of deaths of children under the age of five. On average, 76 per cent of one-year-olds in Africa were immunized against measles in 2008, against 58 per cent in 1990. Still, in 2008 the highest rates of child mortality worldwide were in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for half of the world's 8.8 million deaths. All 36 countries with under-five mortality rates exceeding 100 per 1,000 live births are in sub-Saharan Africa, except Afghanistan and Myanmar.



Eritrea has reduced its under-five child mortality rate by 50 per cent or more since 1990. In **Malawi**, the under-five child mortality rate fell 56 per cent between 1990 and 2008. During the same period, child mortality declined by 25 per cent in **Equatorial Guinea** and by 14 per cent in **Zambia**. **Ethiopia**, **Mozambique** and **Niger** have seen absolute reductions of more than 100 per 1,000 live births since 1990. The annual average rate of reduction of deaths among children under five rose more than 4 percentage points in **Botswana**, **Ghana**, **Lesotho**, **Rwanda** and **Swaziland**.

GOAL 5:
Improve maternal health

Even though the goal of reducing maternal mortality has seen the least progress, remarkable gains were recorded in North Africa, where the share of women who saw a skilled health worker at least once during pregnancy increased by 70 per cent. In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of urban women who received antenatal care at least once increased from 84 per cent in 1990 to 89 per cent in 2008. The corresponding proportions for rural women were 55 to 66 per cent, indicating that coverage has improved at a faster pace in the countryside.

In **Rwanda**, the skilled birth attendance rate increased from 39 per cent to 52 per cent from 2005 to 2008 and contraceptive prevalence among married women aged 15-49 jumped from 9 per cent in 2005 to 26 per cent in 2008. The contraceptive prevalence rate among married women aged 15-49 in **Malawi** has more than doubled since 1992 to 33 per cent in 2004. Between 1990 and 2009, **Burkina Faso** showed coverage gains of more than 20 percentage points in skilled birth attendance.

GOAL 6:
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Years of raising awareness and campaigning have contributed to a decline (by 25 per cent since the mid-1990s) in the annual number of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa. By the end of 2008, an estimated 2.9 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving anti-retroviral therapy, compared to about 2.1 million in 2007. However, sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 72 per cent of all new HIV infections in 2008. Malaria prevention is expanding. In 26 African countries, use of mosquito nets by children rose from just 2 per cent in 2000 to 22 per cent in 2008.

In **Uganda**, the adult HIV prevalence rate dropped from 8 per cent in 2001 to 5.4 per cent in 2007. The number of new HIV infections among children has declined significantly in **Botswana**, from 4,600 in 1999 to 890 in 2007.

GOAL 7:
Ensure environmental sustainability

Africa shows one of the largest net losses of forests, with 3.4 million hectares lost per year over the period 2000–2010. While sub-Saharan Africa's per capita emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) remain low compared to those of other regions, key habitats for threatened species of wildlife are not being adequately protected and the number of species facing extinction is growing by the day. Between 1990 and 2008, access to clean water expanded by 22 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, but only 60 per cent of the population is served so far. North Africa has already met the MDG target on access to water.

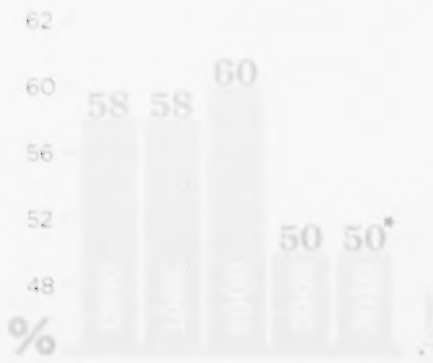
In 2006, 80 per cent of the rural population in **Ghana** had access to improved drinking water, an increase of 43 per cent on 1990 levels. In **Mali**, the percentage of the population with at least one point of access to improved sanitation rose from 35 per cent in 1990 to 45 per cent in 2006. In **Senegal**, the proportion of people living in cities with access to improved water reached 93 per cent in 2006.

GOAL 8:
Develop a global partnership for development

Official development assistance (ODA) remains well below the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for most donors. In 2009, the only countries to reach or exceed the target were Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The shortfall in aid affects Africa in particular. At the 2005 Gleneagles Summit of the industrialized countries' Group of Eight, members projected that their commitments, combined with those of other donors, would double ODA to Africa by 2010. But it is estimated that in 2010 Africa will receive only about $11 bn out of the $25 bn increase envisaged at Gleneagles.

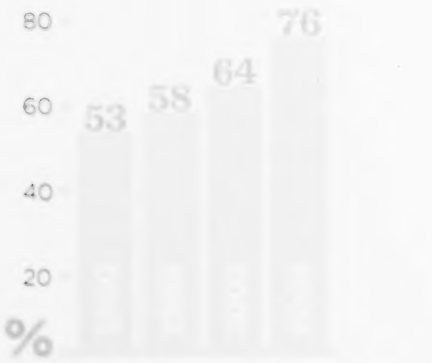
The continent's hopes of benefiting more from the international trade system also remain frustrated, as the Doha Round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization continues to face stalemate. Concluding those negotiations would improve market access for African products. Some warn, however, that its outcome could also erode the preferential advantages currently enjoyed by least developed countries, many of which are from Africa.

Poverty rate in sub-Saharan Africa:
% of people living below $1.25 per day



Source: UN Africa Renewal, from data in World Bank and International Monetary Fund, *Global Monitoring Report 2010*

Primary school enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa:
% of children in age group



Source: UN Africa Renewal from data in UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*, and 2010.

INTERVIEW

For African business, ending corruption is 'priority number one'

UN Global Compact urges companies to operate ethically

The United Nations Global Compact is an initiative to encourage businesses to voluntarily adhere to ethical standards. Launched a decade ago in 2000, the initiative now has about 7,700 corporate participants and stakeholders in 130 countries, including 297 firms in 29 sub-Saharan African nations. Most recently, a high-level business leaders summit in New York on 24-25 June, organized by the Global Compact, declared that "embedding human rights, labour, environmental and anti-corruption principles into corporate practices benefits both society and business." Just before the summit, *Africa Renewal* spoke with Executive Director Georg Kell about the Compact's anti-corruption work.

Marketplace in Tamale, Ghana: Many African businesspeople resent the bribes they must pay to corrupt officials in order to function.

© UN Africa Renewal / Ernest Harsch

Africa Renewal The Global Compact adopted its 10th principle, on fighting corruption, in 2004. In much media coverage of corruption and in some official anti-corruption programmes, there seems to be an assumption that corruption primarily concerns the public sector. Yet you focus on the corporate world. Could you discuss corruption as it relates to both the private and public sectors?

Georg Kell Often there is a blame game. The private sector blames the public sector. The public sector retorts that it is the private sector which is the initiator. The truth is that there is supply and demand and both are complicit. But it is also true that the more the involvement of government in economic activity in general, the higher the degree of abuse of power and corruption. Several recent reviews have confirmed that.

In principle, if the rules of the game are clear and they are enforced strictly, if there is a distinction between private sector competition on the one hand and rule making and government entities on the other, then there is less opportunity for corruption.

Corruption, experts agree, is a systemic issue which involves society as a whole. It involves both private and public sectors. It involves education, the basic economic system, the regulatory system, how the economy is run and more generally the ethical values which are in place.

AR Some analysts of corruption in developing countries argue that it is a question of too much government involvement. Others that the involvement is not of the right kind. In Africa, the state is generally very weak, with little effective regulation. Can you comment?

Global Compact Executive Director Georg Kell: "Corruption is a systemic issue which involves society as a whole. It involves both private and public sectors."

UN Photo/Paul Fusco

GK The perfect balance between regulatory efficacy on the one hand and private sector entrepreneurial-driven activities on the other hand is always the ideal. I don't think there is one size that fits all. Different economies have come from different historical trajectories and are defined in different ways. But one can say that the clearer the rules of the game and the better that regulation actually works, the less corruption there is.

> "The clearer the rules of the game and the better that regulation actually works, the less corruption there is."

In most countries today, since the adoption of the UN Convention Against Corruption [in 2003], corruption is subject to criminal law. The problem is effective implementation. That is true not only of corruption but also many public domain issues, be it environmental issues, health and safety and so forth. The efficiency of public institutions in enforcing and implementing what governments at the highest level have ratified is partly a function of institutional capacity. But it is also a function of priority setting, what is considered important.

What is new today, unlike ten years ago, is that business is actually calling for clear signals of the rules of the game. Ten years ago, business would pursue a purely liberal agenda and argue that any form of regulation is bad. Today that is no longer the case. They say that we need technical standards that reward good, efficient policies and practices. They say that if corruption enforcement is not working well, not much else will be working either.

AR Do African businesses share that view?

GK I was recently at one of our regional meetings of African Global Compact networks – and we have networks in about 15 African countries. To my amazement, all business leaders, irrespective of the country, when asked what their priority was, said that it was reducing corruption and creating an enabling environment for obtaining a license to import, export and so forth. It is always about payments. They said, "We have to pay so many institutional players and these transaction costs hold us back." So, corruption is considered priority number one by African business leaders.

They may not say that in public, because they depend on the hand that feeds them. But when speaking as a collective voice they make it very clear that corruption is a serious problem that holds them back. Less corruption and more institutional support would make them more competitive and they would grow faster.

AR How do you convince a company to stop paying bribes, especially in countries where corruption is widespread and many other companies are also paying bribes or kick-backs in order to get contracts?

GK This is the basic dilemma. If I as an individual say no to bribery, extortion and corruption and then my competitor gets the business, I will suffer a disadvantage. The answer to that is two-fold. We must work at a policy level to improve the situation. In the country where I was born, Germany, bribery was basically tax deductible until a few years ago. Only recently have Germany and other OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] countries gotten serious about corruption.

But at the corporate level, how do you convince individual companies? The only way forward is what we call collective action. You mobilize a number of like-minded companies that all agree they would be better off if there is less corruption. None

may want to take the first step. But if you manage to motivate them to act together, at the same time, and possibly with public policy counterparts, then you have a good chance of making a difference. We have done this already in a few countries. One is Malawi (see box, page 36).

AR Have you noticed any differences between foreign firms and national companies?

GK Foreign companies from the OECD countries are often scrutinized quite closely back home, by shareholders, legislators and the media. So even small infringements can cause quite a scene. African companies face material challenges, including how to improve the regulatory environment, how to overcome deficiencies in energy, transportation and so on. The focus may differ, but often the process of finding solutions can be very similar. In our individual country networks, often local companies are the majority. But we always favour a mix between the foreign and local, because most of the learning happens through them being together.

AR African governments are often very eager to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). In the process, are they sometimes less vigilant than they should be?

GK My colleagues in UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development] not long ago developed an argument that there is a risk that countries underbid each other in trying to attract FDI and therefore end up losing their bargaining sense. To what extent that is true is hard to see. But given the need to create employment and to improve the standard of living for a large number of people, one can understand the desire to attract FDI. With Asian countries, especially China, now major players, that increases the potential supply of investors overall. That is a good thing for African countries, as they have more choices now and hopefully their bargaining position is being strengthened through that.

President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi signs the UN Convention Against Corruption in 2004. In Malawi, the government, civil society and business groups are working together to combat the problem.

UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe

AR You mentioned China. There have been criticisms from some in the North that China and India are coming in as investors and sometimes as donors, but not following the same kind of transparency standards that the OECD requires of its members. Does the Global Compact work with state enterprises from China and India?

GK We are very proud of our strong networks in both China and India. It is quite amazing how fast the learning occurs, and the willingness of major companies of these countries to embrace the compact and its philosophy.

We have for example a network in Sudan, with a strong participation of Indian and Chinese companies. No other companies could do better. Clearly massive investments were made, and when that happens things sometimes go wrong. But the infusion of capital is very welcome, because much of it goes into infrastructure, transportation and the like, which would otherwise not happen.

AR Reports about large-scale corruption in Africa often point to the role of foreign banks, in helping corrupt rulers deposit their spoils in hidden offshore accounts. The recent global financial crisis has also drawn attention to the less-than-open practices of many financial institutions. How does the Global Compact view such problems with banking institutions?

> Having a clean finance sector that is not a hand maiden for the abuse of power is of critical importance."

see page 36

AFRICA at 50

FIFTY YEARS AGO, 17 African countries achieved their national independence. Their "Golden Jubilee" has spurred debate across Africa over what the continent has achieved over the past half century — and where it is headed. In this special series of articles, *Africa Renewal* examines Africans' hopes and disappointments, as well as their ideas for unlocking the continent's vast potential.

Weighing a half century of independence

Beyond "heady days" and sobering reality lies great untapped potential

By Ernest Harsch

Cameroon and 16 other African countries celebrate their 50th anniversary of independence this year.

© ACP Press and Information / Robert L. Boga

Standing before an assemblage of local and international dignitaries in Cameroon's capital, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro noted that she had been too young to celebrate Cameroon's independence on 1 January 1960. But in her own country she did "remember clearly the joy in my school when Tanzania became independent. Those were heady days indeed for Africa."

Since then Africa has registered some notable accomplishments, Ms. Migiro said at the opening of a two-day international conference assessing the 50th anniversary of nearly a score of African countries. The continent has also produced many great figures, from leaders like Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela to the millions of "unsung heroes and heroines" who toil daily to build a better life for their children.

"However," Ms. Migiro added, "as we celebrate Africa's achievements, opportunities and potential, we must also honestly address the realities and challenges that confront the continent." Too many babies still die in infancy, she pointed out, too few children find places in school, too many farmers cannot get their crops to market and too many factories lie idle for lack of spare parts, skills or investment.

This mixed assessment of Africa at 50 is typical of reactions across the continent. Togo's celebrated singer

King Mensah told a French television station, "In these 50 years, good things have happened, but a lot of work remains to be done." He added that if his father, who died 25 years ago, returned from the grave, "he'd be able to walk home without asking anyone for directions. So little has changed. That doesn't mean leaders have done nothing, but they have done more harm than good."

'Trial and error'

African leaders themselves, while often emphasizing the advances, have nevertheless felt obliged to acknowledge some of the shortcomings. President Paul Biya of Cameroon, at the 18 May opening of the Yaoundé international conference, noted how ill-prepared many African countries were when the former colonial powers decided to hand over the reins of national sovereignty. "We have undoubtedly proceeded by trial and error. But could it have been otherwise?" Besides inexperience and lack of preparation, President Biya cited "hunger, pandemics, civil war, external pressure and even corruption to justify our failures. We prefer to accept responsibility and say: 'We have done our best'."

The conference, entitled "Africa 21, an Opportunity for the World," was organized to mark this year's 50th anniversary of Cameroon and of 16 other African countries, mostly former French colonies but also Nigeria, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A few countries in North and sub-Saharan Africa attained their independence earlier, and it took years longer for the colonies of Portugal and the peoples governed by the white-minority regimes of Southern Africa to win their freedom (see page 28). But 1960 was the year in which the greatest number of African states won independence, giving a major impetus to the liberation process for the continent as a whole.

Showing the flag at the independence Day march in Cameroon. President Paul Biya and other leaders note, however, that most African countries remain highly dependent on an international economy over which they have little influence.

Beyond celebration, the Yaoundé conference was intended to stimulate reflection by government leaders, academic experts, civil society representatives, businesspeople, donor officials and others on the continent's experiences over the past half century — and the prospects that lie ahead. Whatever their assessments of the past, most agreed that the continent's potential is enormous.

'Unfinished independence'

For Kofi Annan, a former UN secretary-general, the attainment of national sovereignty brought a basic reorientation to African countries. "Freed from the will of European capitals," Mr. Annan said, "they have sought their own governance paths and political directions and built national identities. Many of these countries have worked hard to develop functioning economies and political systems that prioritize the needs of their own citizens, rather than distant consumers."

A number of conference participants questioned the extent of that change, however. With most African economies still relying heavily on foreign financing and earnings from the export of unprocessed raw materials, they continue to depend on the same patterns of exchange that were originally developed in the colonial era. President Biya noted that with globalization, Africa's "national economies are still subject to the fluctuations of a global economy over which its governments have little influence."

Others have been more severe in their judgments, pointing to the continued political and language ties that also closely link European powers with their former colonies. "Formally, [African] states acceded to international sovereignty in 1960," Senegalese historian Ibrahima Thioub told the French daily *Le Monde*. "But that juridical change did not mean the end of colonization, that is, of an economic exploitation coupled with submission to another culture."

While the UK, Belgium and Portugal have all maintained extensive commercial and political relations with their former African colonies, France's ongoing ties have been especially pronounced. They also have generated considerable comment, given that 14 of the 17 countries that achieved independence in 1960 were formerly under French rule.

Symbolizing those links, France has organized annual Franco-African summit meetings for the past quarter

Waiting for treatment at a hospital in Sudan. Improvements in health care have extended Africans' average life expectancy in most countries, despite the ravages of AIDS.

century, most recently in June in the French city of Nice. Until 1989 France maintained 15,000 troops at bases in Africa; over the subsequent two decades that number fell to 10,000, with about half serving on temporary missions, often under UN peacekeeping mandates.

In his Independence Day address on 4 April, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal noted that many of his country's youth, professionals and soldiers resented the continued presence of a French base on the Cap Vert peninsula near Dakar, regarding it as a mark of an "unfinished independence." He announced plans to negotiate a rapid closure of the base. On 9 June the French flag finally came down and the base was transferred to Senegal's control.

Improving governance

President Biya, in his opening address to the Yaoundé conference, emphasized the early difficulties that confronted the continent's newly independent states. There were few trained civil servants, few military officers and few professionals returning from studies abroad, while the territories the new governments sought to administer were vast and their populations belonged to different ethnic, cultural and language groups. In such a context, building new states "was no easy task."

The people of the DRC had long equated Belgian rule with violence and expected that independence would bring an end to such violence, Congolese philosopher Kä Mana has noted. Unfortunately, the new Congolese state was immediately swept by violence, ethnic secessionist movements, army mutinies and political competition stoked by foreign mining companies and the international rivalries of the Cold War. From the 1961 assassination of the visionary Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, through decades of repressive dictatorship, to the outbreak of two civil wars that claimed several million lives, the Congolese people have known little peace. It was "violence which has dominated the five decades of our independence," Mr. Mana has written.

Many other African countries were also marked by political turbulence and war. Most of those that managed to escape outright armed conflict were afflicted to varying degrees by authoritarian rule, under either military or one-party regimes.

When in the early 1990s much of the continent was swept by massive popular agitation for democracy, activists frequently referred to those movements as struggles for Africa's "second independence."

With a few exceptions, most African countries have since adopted some form of multiparty electoral system, with periodic elections of their presidents and parliaments. For many of the participants at the Yaoundé conference, that shift has been one of the most notable achievements of the past 50 years, along with the emergence of an independent media and in some countries quite vibrant and active civil society organizations. Those developments, they argue, place Africa on a sounder footing for dealing with the many challenges that face it.

Some of Africa's critical intellectuals believe this recent democratic shift has been more in form than substance. According to Achille Mbembe, a well-known Cameroonian academic who now teaches at US and South African universities, "For the most part, Africans still are not even able to freely choose their leaders. Too many countries are still at the mercy of satraps whose sole aim is to remain in power for life."

The Yaoundé conference heard some stern words as well. Mohamed ElBaradei, an Egyptian who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 when he was head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, commented on the 50th anniversary: "Africa has been liberated – as states. The people have not been liberated in many countries, because they have not gained the right to empower themselves and to live in a democracy."

Mr. Annan noted that despite progress in the quality of African governance over the last decade, "There is still a long way to go. There are still too many instances

of corruption, of elite capture of resources, of growing inequality in wealth and opportunity, abuse of electoral processes and selective adherence to the rule of law." Therefore, he said, improving governance is the most crucial step for moving the continent forward. "It is strong leadership and good governance that will make the difference."

> Whatever their assessments of the past, most agree that the continent's potential is enormous."

Progress and potential

However much commentators have highlighted Africa's numerous problems over the past half century, most conference participants also took note of its progress despite a difficult international environment. Jean Ping, president of the African Union Commission, declared himself "resolutely optimistic." After all, he pointed out, 50 years "is both much and little," and it took other countries and regions far longer after their independence to show tangible results.

The statistics demonstrate that Africa has made some notable gains. In 1960 the average life expectancy was just 42 years. But by 2007 it had increased to 55 years, despite the recent ravages of AIDS. Over that same period the infant mortality rate declined by nearly half, from 153 deaths per 1,000 live births to 82 deaths. At independence in 1960 very few African children were able to go to school. Subsequent decades saw concerted efforts regarding education, despite the serious financial constraints of the 1980s and early 1990s. Thanks to a major push for "education for all," the net primary school enrolment rate climbed from 58 per cent in 1991 to 77 per cent in 2006, and the rate of university enrolment doubled.

Such improvements are all the more telling given Africa's enormous increase in population. In 1960 there were an estimated 280 million Africans on the continent as a whole. Today, Ms. Migiro noted, there are a billion, "more than half of whom are under the age of 25."

The continent's relative youth poses serious challenges, President Ali Bongo of Gabon emphasized in his conference address. "What vision does Africa have for Africa's young people?" he asked. So far, he suggested, African countries have not invested enough in human development — including education and training — or in creating jobs that can keep skilled and talented young Africans from emigrating abroad. Their energy and abilities can help transform Africa, President Bongo insisted. Moreover, "Young Africans can change the world and must change the world."

Women too must acquire a more central role, argued Ms. Amina Hassane Wangari of Niger, president of the West Africa Businesswomen's Network. Women are not only at the heart of the continent's development, she said, but can be at the heart of African democracy if they are able to obtain more pivotal decision-making positions.

Overall, African leaders must take greater initiative and responsibility for their development, argued Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson of Ghana, who spoke to the conference on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI. A major step in that direction, he said, was the adoption by African leaders of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is intended to create a continent of "self-confident African men and women."

"Africa has boundless potential," Ms. Migiro affirmed. In addition to its young and talented people, it has tremendous mineral wealth, 40 per cent of the world's unharnessed hydroelectric power generation potential and "vast untapped geothermal and solar resources."

Because of its wealth, Africa is seeing an increase in its geostrategic importance on the world stage, Mr. Annan pointed out. It is not only attracting greater attention from investors but also acquiring a stronger international voice, as during the December 2009 Copenhagen summit on climate change or in the high-level discussions of the industrialized and developing countries' Group of 20. "Comprising a quarter of the world's states and one billion people," Mr. Annan said, "Africa is a sleeping giant about to be awoken."

Student in Malawi: The continent's future lies with its youth

UN Photo / Evan Schneider

AFRICA at 50

'A lot of reasons to be optimistic'

Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN special adviser on Africa, reflects on 50 years

The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa was created in 2003 to increase international support for Africa's development and security, especially for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union's programme for economic, social and political advancement. Under-Secretary-General Cheick Sidi Diarra, who is from Mali, heads the office as special adviser on Africa. Fifty years after many African countries gained their independence, *Africa Renewal* sought his views on the continent's progress and challenges.

UN Under-Secretary-General Cheick Sidi Diarra: "A new generation of leadership is coming up in some African countries."

UN Africa Renewal - Marlene Tremblay Cimon

Africa Renewal **When African countries first attained their independence, most of their trade was with their former colonial powers, and most of their financial assistance came from there. Fifty years later, how much more independent are African economies?**

Cheick Sidi Diarra This is one of the more sensitive parts of the evaluation of African independence. In the political field a lot of progress has been made since the 1960s. All African countries have gained independence, either through liberation struggles or through a negotiated process.

But the sensitive part lies with the social and economic progress. Intra-African trade represents a dismal 9 per cent of the overall trade of Africa with the international community. And Africa's trade represents only 3 per cent of global trade. We have not made progress in that area. Africa has even lost ground because the values of Africa's commodities have dropped since independence. The prices of commodities are not fixed by Africans themselves. They are fixed elsewhere.

The financial system has not been developed in a way that allows the integration of Africa into the international financial mechanisms. Africa's financial transactions represent a dismal 0.87 per cent of global financial transactions, which is nothing.

This lack of economic progress has its social implications. In the [UN Development Programme's annual] *Human Development Report*, you will see that among the 20 countries which have performed the least in terms of human development, most are African countries.

The current situation has many origins. There is the lack of diversification of the economy. Although these countries are commodity producers, they don't process the commodities. All the value that is added to these commodities is added elsewhere. And there is a lack of any kind of link between the extractive industries that prevail in many countries and the rest of the economy. So there is no spill-over effect.

On average 80 per cent of the workforce is in the rural areas. Although they spend the whole year working, they produce only a fraction of what a farmer in Europe or America produces on the same size of land,

So a few things have to be done: adjustment of institutions, creation of infrastructure, good policies. But what we need more is good leaders. Once we have good leaders, the young people will follow.

Once we have good leaders, the young people will follow."

because they don't have fertilizer or the seed quality is not good or they simply don't have the know-how to produce better.

And infrastructure is lacking. Be it information and communication technology, roads and railways or whatever, infrastructure is missing.

But there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about Africa. The first one is the human capital that Africa has. Africa has reached a billion people. The young population represents a minimum of 60 per cent. These young people are yearning for exactly the same well-being as anybody else on the face of this planet. African young people have been trained in the best universities around the world. Africa just has to develop policies to retain them, to create a suitable environment for them to stay home and help build Africa.

The natural resources, thank God, are still there. Now we have to develop intelligent policies for sharing in the value-added. We have to create a legal environment to attract more business, and to lean less and less on official development assistance.

AR **For decades after independence, the economic policies pursued by African countries generally came from the outside. To what extent does the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), designed by African leaders, represent a break with this pattern?**

CSD The first break is ownership, with its corollary, the sense of responsibility. As long as the international community was developing programmes for Africa, sometimes without even substantive input from African countries, they didn't have much result. The situation even worsened, leading us to structural adjustment in the 1990s.

The advantage of NEPAD is that its ownership is with African leaders themselves. If they fail, it will be their own responsibility. If they succeed, which I wish, it will be praised and supported by the international community.

Africans are rolling out sectoral policies and specific sectoral projects. For example, on agriculture. They know how to make sustainable, productive agriculture. The rate of growth of agriculture should be a minimum of 6 per cent on a yearly basis. There should be an investment of 10 per cent of the national budget in agriculture. The goals are there. The means have been identified. Now they're moving from the stage of continental projects to country specifics. That has brought the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency to have compacts with individual African countries, a commitment that the government works on a voluntary basis on agriculture.

They are doing exactly the same thing in health. They are doing exactly the same thing in infrastructure. This is good, because it is concrete.

NEPAD priorities are inspired by the Millennium Development Goals. When you bring these two together, you have something very strong, a programme that has been initiated by African countries, but also supported by the United Nations. So at least at the policy level, there has been a

For agriculture — the mainstay of most African economies — to become more sustainable and productive, governments should devote at least 10 per cent of their budgets to the sector, argue proponents of NEPAD.

UN Photo / Milton Grant

Cocoa beans, one of Africa's export crops. "The values of Africa's commodities have dropped

change. It's home grown and fully conceived by African leaders.

AR Could you reflect on what Africa has learned about the kind of leadership it needs?

CSD There are three types of leadership that Africa has known. The first was the "fathers of independence." Their role was to keep the nation together, because most African countries are multi-ethnic. Community, tribes, ethnic groups sometimes prevailed above the notion of nation. So they gave themselves the responsibility to consolidate territorial integrity, nation building. They did what they had to do: consolidate national integrity and push forward the agenda for the independence of the rest of the African colonies.

The second group of leaders are those who have come to power by infringing national constitutions and taking advantage of the social discontent that the structural adjustment programmes provoked. Most of the time, these people are military. History has demonstrated that almost all of them have failed, because the rule of law didn't prevail, human rights were not protected, the basic principles of democracy did not prevail and most of them were simply corrupt.

Then there is a third generation of leaders. This is a new generation that is coming up in some African countries. They have vision. They are young. They are strong. And they know how to mobilize their people. I will not name any, because I would make the others very jealous. Actually, I will name one, who is not in power anymore: Alpha Oumar Konaré [former president of Mali and former chairman of the African Union Commission].

They have vision. They have aspirations for their people. They need to be supported, to show that good leadership pays. They need strong support from the international community.

AR On the international community, how can it better support Africa?

CSD There is just one thing. The rest of the world has to change its perception of Africa. It has to see Africa not only as a continent which is forever leaning on international aid and support. It has to see Africa as a continent of huge potential.

In the 1970s, if you remember, China was seen as a threat to the rest of the world. But the leadership of China in the 1980s succeeded in changing the paradigm. From China being seen as the threat of communism, people have started to discover China as a potential market for consumption, for production. Slowly, but surely, investors have changed their perception and attitude, and see China as a land of opportunity and potential.

This needs to happen in Africa. To not see Africa only as a burden, but to see Africa as a potential: consumers, good producers, of commodities but also possible transformation and processing.

> The prices of commodities are not fixed by Africans themselves. They are fixed elsewhere."

AR Any concluding words?

CSD These 50 years of independence are very short in the life of a nation. But it's good enough to make an assessment of where we have come from, where we are right now and where we want to go.

Never before have we had such an opportunity to influence what is happening internationally. We have the chance to create suitable environments for business. We have the chance to give to each African individual the dignity and respect he deserves. We have a chance to have a vision. Now is the time to seize this opportunity.

A half century of change

Africa's share of world exports

Africa: Gross domestic product

Africa's population, millions

Africa: Infant mortality rate

Urban population

Africa: Other selected indicators

	THEN	NOW
Food import costs (US$ bn, constant, 1965-2008)	0.3	9.2
Cereal yield (kg per hectare, 1961-2007)	810	1,544
Manufacturing (% GDP, 1968-2008)	12	9
Electricity production (bn KWH, 1971-2006)	88	514
External debt ($ bn, current, 1965-2008)	0.47	90
Child immunization (DPT, %, 1983-2007)	33	76
Average life expectancy (yrs, 1960-2007)	42	55
Tertiary school enrolment (%, 1991-2005)	5	10
Arms imports (US$ mn, constant, 1960-2008)*	122	609

AFRICA 50

Ghana's economy: hope rekindled

Ups and downs give way to cautious revival

By Efam Dovi

When the church bells rang across the city of Accra to signal the birth of modern Ghana, it was a period of hope and optimism for a better future. Victor Adams was in his home village of Shiashi, a suburb of the Ghanaian capital. At the time, in 1957, Shiashi had no electricity, roads or piped water. "There were only eight of these houses in the entire village," recalls Mr. Adams, as he points to a mud house.

"This part of the village was bushy and we farmed the land," he says of what is now one of Accra's high-priced residential areas. Today a tract of land measuring 100 metres by 80 metres can fetch the equivalent of US$65,000, according to Mr. Adams, who manages the family-owned land. Prices are being pushed further up by the exponential expansion of the nation's capital.

Shiashi and its surrounding areas have been transformed since independence. But signs of underdevelopment still abound, including poor sanitation, unpaved roads and makeshift homes. In a way, the story of Shiashi reflects Ghana's uneven economic and social development over the years. Mr. Adams, a middle school student at the time of independence, says, "Our country could have done better." It is a feeling shared by many Ghanaians.

Drying cocoa in Ghana's Ashanti Region. Will cocoa, the economy's mainstay for the past century, now be joined by oil?

The early decades

At independence, Ghana had a relatively good education system. It held foreign reserves of about US$481 mn. and its gross domestic product (GDP) was on a par with those of Malaysia and South Korea. It could afford to provide assistance to some of its African neighbours.

But as in other African countries after independence, there followed decades of political instability and economic collapse. The question of why Ghana's fortunes declined "is a deep one," says Ishac Diwan, the World Bank country director in Ghana.

Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, pursued a strategy of state-directed economic growth. Many of his grand projects later collapsed as revenue from cocoa, the main source of foreign exchange, dived with the fall in world prices. Some of the state corporations provided Ghanaians with social benefits, but those were "expensive in economic terms," notes Joe Abbey, head of the Centre for Policy Analysis, an independent think-tank. "The reality is that a lot of them were making losses."

Later, in the 1980s, much of the country's manufacturing sector, including the garment industry, collapsed after Ghana adopted the now-discredited structural adjustment programmes pushed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

On the political front, the overthrow of Mr. Nkrumah in 1966 initiated a series of destabilizing coups. When

there were elections, no leader could complete a full term. That changed only after Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings transformed himself from a military ruler into an elected civilian president in 1992. His transfer of power to a democratically elected opposition in 2000 marked the start of the reversal of Ghana's political fortunes. According to Mr. Abbey, no one can deny the role of President Rawlings in helping to return Ghana to democratic governance. "You can't take it from him."

Turning the page

In the last decade Ghana has enjoyed strong economic growth rates, rising from 5.4 per cent at the start of the decade to 6.3 per cent in 2008. If growth can be maintained at 6 to 8 per cent, some hope, Ghana may be able to achieve middle-income status by 2015.

Economic growth and fiscal expansion have also allowed for significant progress towards some of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), according to a March 2010 World Bank report on Ghana. Ghana is on track to attain the goals for primary school completion rates, gender parity in school enrolment and access to water.

"I think Ghana is a good example of what can be done with stability and openness," says Mr. Diwan. "We saw agriculture based on small-scale production increase at 5 per cent year after year. We saw services emerge. And we saw a more competitive financial sector."

Energy crucial

The economy, however, is only poorly diversified. For a century cocoa has been the economic mainstay. Agriculture contributes about three-quarters of export earnings, but is still mainly rain-fed, small-scale and labour-intensive. Post-harvest losses run at 30 to 35 per cent. The government has embarked on large-scale mechanized farming, especially in rice production, but that requires massive investments.

Industry is struggling with high input costs, high interest rates and inadequate infrastructure. Still, Ghana spends about $1.1 bn, or 10 per cent of its GDP, on infrastructure, according to a March 2010 *Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic Report*, published by a consortium of donor and African institutions. Perhaps the "most pressing challenge," it says, is the supply of energy. Ghana largely relies on its rain-dependent Akosombo hydroelectric dam for electrical power, but with its emerging oil and gas sector, the authorities are looking to promote gas-fuelled power generation.

The institutional weaknesses of the West African subregion are also an obstacle, says Mr. Abbey. Mr. Diwan agrees. "Opening of the barriers in the whole of West Africa is very crucial" to expanding the domestic market, he says.

Oil on the horizon

Recent oil discoveries have increased hopes of an economic breakthrough. Oil, says Mr. Abbey, may be able to break "the chains that are paralyzing Ghana and its industries and making us uncompetitive."

While opportunities beckon, there are risks as well. Mr. Abbey notes the common phenomenon of the "resource curse," in which poor management of oil, diamonds or other natural resources can distort economies and breed corruption. Oil production, adds Mr. Diwan, "should be approached with open eyes," since the social impact could be huge.

The government insists it is determined to get it right. With support from donor agencies, the government is revising the legal codes that govern oil exploration and production, local participation and revenue management. In addition, a strong and dynamic civil society has emerged in recent years and is pushing for transparency and accountability.

There are reasons to be optimistic. "There is a lot of robustness in the movement towards progress," says Mr. Diwan. "We are building on a well educated population, large private sector and pretty organized government." In managing its oil, he believes, Ghana will succeed where other African countries have failed.

Marketplace in northern Ghana. Although economic growth has been strong, the economy remains poorly diversified and faces energy constraints. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

AFRICA 50

Good governance: central to all progress

After decades of military and one-party regimes, more African countries are now holding regular elections

Autocracy gives way to multi-party elections and greater openness

By André-Michel Essoungou

Never before had pictures of endless lines of enthusiastic voters in front of polling stations defined Guinea's international image. But on 27 June – after 52 years of independence and a turbulent political history – a festive atmosphere engulfed the West African country as millions were allowed to choose their leader for the first time, from among 24 candidates. Guineans came out in large numbers and showed considerable patience while waiting, often for hours, in front of polling stations.

"For many years, free elections were a dream," Abdoulaye Baillo Diallo, an aide to one candidate, told a *Wall Street Journal* reporter. "Now it has become a reality." Amadou Diallo, an army doctor, told the *New York Times*, "Before, we knew the elections were sewed up in advance. They were rigged." On this occasion, various observers confirmed, the process was transparent, free and fair, raising hopes of a new dawn for the country.

Since its 1958 independence from France, Guinea has been ruled mostly by civilian or military autocrats. To a large extent, that was a general trend across Africa from the early 1960s to the 1990s. One-party systems and military dictatorships were the order of the day. Only a limited number of people enjoyed the privilege of making or contributing to decisions on state affairs.

Closed systems

In some countries where independence was hard-won, nationalist parties and leaders soon established dominant structures that wielded exclusive rights to govern. In 1964, barely a year after independence, the only opposition party in Kenya joined Jomo Kenyatta's dominant party, whose rule remained entrenched for nearly four decades. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) led the independence struggle and therefore had

wide support. But in 1964 that dominance was codified in law as the CPP became the only legal party and Mr. Nkrumah was proclaimed "president for life."

Elsewhere, authorities who inherited power from their former colonial rulers also soon suppressed competing organizations and voices. In Gabon, President Bongo declared a one-party state in 1968, a system that lasted until 1990. From 1966 neighbouring Cameroon experienced a similar fate.

Soon after independence, as discontent grew with regimes unable to lift up peoples' living standards, military dictatorships came to the fore. In 1963 alone three governments fell to coups, in Togo, Dahomey (later renamed Benin) and Congo-Brazzaville. By 1975 approximately half the countries on the continent were led by military or civilian-military governments.

During most of the 30-year period from 1960 to 1990, only a few countries, such as Senegal, Mauritius and Botswana, permitted competing political parties and some civil society organizations to function.

Some proponents of one-party systems argued that multiple parties were not needed, since democratic values and institutions existed within traditional African cultures. Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanzania, suggested that African family life "was everywhere based on certain practices and attitudes which together mean basic equality, freedom and unity." Leopold Sédar Senghor, in Senegal, argued that African conceptions of democracy were based on "palaver," or dialogue, in which everyone is able to speak in turn, "but once everyone has expressed his opinion, the minority follows the majority, so there is unanimity."

Others argued simply that multiparty systems were costly and inefficient, especially when African countries were faced with so many challenges. Pluralism, they maintained, would breed division and hinder the construction of national identity and mobilization for development. Public debate, criticism and voting were regarded as luxuries.

Riot police: In too many countries, public dissent is still met with repression.

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But the lack of popular checks on leaders' decisions contributed to abuses of power by individuals and institutions, onerous despotic regimes, the violation of human rights and widespread corruption. With all legal means of political reform essentially blocked, civil conflicts and uprisings erupted. Under the circumstances, the promises of social and economic improvements and even national unity could not be met.

Turning point

In the early 1990s, popular protests against systems that excluded the majority of citizens from the political process reached their height. Many took to the streets to demand a right to be heard, to have free and fair elections and to have open public institutions. They called for radical changes in the basic style of governance.

> Many took to the streets to demand a right to be heard, to have free and fair elections and to have open public institutions."

"Africans are basically asking for three things," Edem Kodjo, a former secretary-general of the Organization of African Unity (which later became the African Union), said in June 1990,

"transparency, accountability and participation in the political process."

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, most donor powers affirmed that they supported democratization. Good governance, human rights and opposition to corruption became important conditions in their aid policies.

> Good governance is central to improving economic performance and promoting economic progress in Africa."
>
> —Abdoulie Janneh, executive secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa

Under such pressure for reform from both within and without, many regimes opened up democratic space. In the Congo Republic, Benin and Zaire (later renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo), among other countries, national conferences were organized in which incumbent authorities, civil society groups, religious leaders and opposition parties fiercely debated in public for the first time. More or less competitive elections took place, although often in a tense atmosphere. In 1992, the peak of this surge, there were 32 presidential or legislative elections across the continent.

End of monopolies

"The culture of political authoritarianism manifested in military dictatorships and one-party systems dominant in many African countries has in the last two decades gradually given way to competitive party democratic systems," the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) stated in its first *African Governance Report*, published in 2005. "The government no longer monopolizes the public sphere; the people also participate in it."

In a number of countries (including Ghana, Zambia, Mali and Benin), regime change through elections is becoming the norm. Presidential term limits are respected, and so is freedom of the press (see page 23). Human rights violations have become less common and political parties and civil society organizations are involved in daily debates on policy options.

But in other countries elections are not always free, fair or transparent. Majority parties have used their control of government resources to bias the electoral process in their favour, and some elected presidents have unilaterally modified constitutions to try to prolong their stay in office. Press freedoms and civil society activities are frequently under threat.

But even in some countries that have not had regime changes for some time, other aspects of governance may have improved, as in the growing capacity of court systems or the representation of women. In 2008 Rwanda became the first country in the world where women hold a majority in parliament, with 56 per cent of the seats.

Continuing challenges

Even though the scope of African citizens' representation in public institutions has widened, the degree of their real influence over these institutions is often limited. Access to justice is frequently expensive for the majority, and police and armed forces are sometimes the worst human rights abusers. "The greatest threats to good governance today come from corruption, violence and poverty, all of which undermine transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedoms," argues the ECA report.

There is general agreement on the pivotal need to strengthen governance in most African countries, not only to improve political participation, but also to advance development. "Good governance is central to improving economic performance and promoting economic progress in Africa," argued Abdoulie Janneh, the ECA executive secretary, at a major international conference marking the 50th anniversary of African independence in Yaoundé in late May (see page 10).

Five decades after its most significant wave of independence, the continent's mixed record on governance and its hopes for further progress underline the need for such innovative initiatives as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The mechanism is an outgrowth of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the continent's blueprint for economic revival. Established in 2003, it is a voluntary instrument in which participating governments agree to have various aspects of their political governance, observance of human rights and economic decision-making reviewed by their African peers. So far 28 countries have joined the APRM and 11 have undergone comprehensive reviews, which have identified specific areas requiring improvement.

"African Governance Report 2005, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

"The African Peer Review Mechanism

AFRICA 50

African media breaks 'culture of silence'

Reading a newspaper in Madagascar. Since the early 1990s, independent newspapers have broken government monopolies on the press, but in many countries the media remain under threat.

© UNESCO/ Dominique Roger

Journalists struggle to give voice, expand freedoms

By Kwame Karikari

When on 18 March this year the *Daily Nation*, one of Africa's biggest and most successful independent newspapers, celebrated its 50th anniversary, Charles Onyango Obbo, a columnist for the Nairobi, Kenya, paper, wrote, "It has mostly been hell on earth for the African media for most of these 50 years. In fact the freest period for the African media generally has been the 15-year period between 1990 and 2005."

The media boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s, accompanying the movement for democratic reforms in Africa, transformed the continent's media landscape virtually overnight. It ended near-absolute government control and monopoly and ushered in a vibrant pluralism. Suddenly the streets of Africa's capitals were awash with newspapers. The "culture of silence," imposed first under colonialism and then by post-colonial military dictatorships and autocratic one-party states, was rudely broken.

Independent media boom

At independence in 1960 most newspapers were privately owned, organs either of the nationalist political movements and parties or of businesses mostly established by European investors. But by 1970 most newspapers of any significance across the continent were government-owned. Any newspaper expressing independent editorial attitudes was censored, banned or so controlled that most of the owners gave up publishing. Besides apartheid South Africa, only Kenya and Nigeria accommodated private and independent press businesses, even then under enormous political constraints.

In a few countries, such as Gambia and Niger, the first daily newspapers appeared in the period of media liberalization and boom. One man, the Liberian journalist Kenneth Best, started the first daily in Liberia (1981) and the first daily in Gambia (1992). Mr. Best eventually had to flee both countries.

Since the 1990s the independent media have grown like the savannah grass after prolific rainfalls following a long drought. In West Africa, according to a 2006 study sponsored by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), there were over 5,000 newspapers and radio and television stations in 15 countries.

By far the most earth-shaking development was the burst of radio stations. From the capitals to the

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provinces, the booming force of private and independent voices initially threatened to drown out the states' authoritarian broadcasting systems. In semi-desert Mali, for instance, there are today nearly 300 radio stations. In the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo there are about 196 community radio stations. Across the continent, the Internet and mobile telephony augment old media to expand Africans' sources of information and means of mass communication.

The armed conflicts of the 1990s did not seem to hinder the emergence of independent media anywhere, although many media outlets did become targets. Somalia saw the emergence of its first independent press, radio and even TV after it plunged into continuing anarchy. Numerous stations and newspapers emerged in Liberia and Sierra Leone during their notoriously bloody conflicts, while the state-owned broadcasting systems all but collapsed.

Today, two decades since the media boom, Eritrea is about the only country in sub-Saharan Africa in which government has a total monopoly on press and broadcasting.

Strengthening democracy

Linus Gitahi, chief executive of Kenya's Nation Media Group (NMG), said at the Pan-African Media Conference during the *Daily Nation*'s anniversary, "More Africans live in relative freedom today than they did 50 years ago."

No doubt the media's role has been central in strengthening democracy in those countries where there has been tangible progress in governance and respect for human rights.

Weak though they may often be, the media, especially the independent outlets, have made remarkable contributions to peaceful and transparent elections in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia; to post-conflict transitions and the restoration of peace in Liberia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone; and to sustaining constitutional rule in times of political crises in Guinea, Kenya and Nigeria. And many continue to push to open up the space for freedom in suffocating environments.

Radio has expanded local news and information production. And the mobile phone has enhanced citizens' participation in public affairs discussions on the air. Radio, by incorporating many local languages more widely, has promoted positive cultural identity in many communities. At the 10th anniversary this January of Ghana's Radio Ada, a community station at Ada, a coastal town about 100 kilometres from the capital, the chief lamented, "Until the station came here, we did not hear our language on radio. We did not feel that we belonged in Ghana."

In some cases, however, the media have been an instrument of hate, xenophobia and crimes against humanity. While Rwanda's Radio Milles Collines, which played a role in the country's genocide, is the most known, there have been other disturbing examples of media promotion of ethnic hate, as in the bloody aftermath of Kenya's 2007 elections. Even in Ghana's much-celebrated successful election in 2008, some radio stations incessantly preached violence and mobilized partisan mobs to attack opponents. In all such cases the perpetrating media were owned by or were supporters of powerful persons in government, political parties or factions in conflicts.

Continuing repression

The progressive thrust of the media has generally come up against violent repression. When the media have dared to question or uncover criminality and corruption in high places, they have usually earned the extreme wrath of "where power lies."

Thus virtually all assassinations of journalists, such as that of Norbert Zongo in Burkina Faso in 1998, Carlos Cardoso in Mozambique in 2000 or Deyda Heydara in Gambia in 2004, have had similar motives. The report of an independent commission on the Zongo case concluded that "Norbert Zongo was assassinated purely for political reasons, because he practiced committed investigative journalism. He defended a democratic ideal and was committed, through his

A DJ on Mozambique's Radio Komati. The radio is crucial for reaching audiences in Africa's rural areas, and sometimes in their own indigenous languages.

© UNESCO / Sergio Santimano

newspaper, to fight for the respect of human rights and justice against bad governance of the public goods and against impunity."

Various international media rights advocacy groups, such as the New York–based Committee to Protect Journalists, calculate that around 200 journalists have been killed in Africa in the last two decades. The majority of the victims fell in circumstances of war.

The use of repressive legislation has been a major tool in reversing the media's freedoms. Outside of South Africa, where the post-apartheid transition included fundamental reforms in media legislation, the new atmosphere of media pluralism elicited very negligible legal and policy reforms beyond constitutional clauses reaffirming UN principles on free expression.

By 2005 legislative and policy frameworks in most countries were so constraining that the ECA said in a study, "The need for a critical review and overhaul of the legal and policy environment in which the media operates across Africa cannot be overstated."

While individual countries may not have made significant reforms to media legislation and policy, the African Union and regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community and the 11-member Regional Conference of the Great Lakes have all adopted binding protocols and declarations advancing press freedom and freedom of expression.

Most member governments may be violating or ignoring the protocols they have signed, but civil society groups use institutions such as the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights to promote media rights. Some, such as the Media Foundation for West Africa, also use the new regional ECOWAS Community Court of Justice to challenge violations of journalists' rights.

Constraints and limitations

If violent attacks and disabling laws have been used to arrest the media's growth and relevance, professional and financial weaknesses have tended to limit their impact.

Despite the phenomenal growth of the media, Professor Guy Berger of the Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies in South Africa insisted in 2007 that "Africans are the least-served people of the world in terms of the circulation of information, for the reason that this continent exhibits a mass media that is everywhere limited in terms of quantity, and also sometimes quality."

> Independent and pluralistic media in Africa are here to stay, despite the many challenges."

Professor Berger noted, for example, that Africa had the world's lowest number of journalists per capita. South Africa, the continent's highest performer, had one journalist per 1,300 citizens, while Ghana had one per 11,000, Cameroon one per 18,000, Zimbabwe one per 34,000 and Ethiopia one per 99,060.

The huge deficit in trained professionals keeps increasing, despite donor support for short ad hoc courses and the emergence of private training schools.

Of all the constraints and limitations, economic factors appear to be the most critical threat to the survival of media pluralism. Most media outlets remain small operations, with poor business management capacity, but a few like the NMG in Kenya and Multimedia in Ghana have expanded investment into other media, and extended operations across borders into other countries. Yet while a few are growing into huge, multimedia transnational conglomerates, many face the possibility of shrinkage and perhaps extinction.

As media pluralism grows and African economies open up, the media's growing dependence on the market threatens to limit editorial independence. Businesses that are visibly dominant in advertising and sponsorships are reported by journalists to be exerting pressure on media to do their bidding, such as by killing stories unfavourable to the businesses.

Such pressures and attacks on press freedom have also propelled the emergence of advocacy and defence organizations across the continent. The Media Institute of Southern Africa in Windhoek, the Media Foundation for West Africa based in Accra, the Media Rights Agenda of Nigeria and Journalists in Danger in Kinshasa are among the best known. National and regional professional journalists associations have also stepped up their defence of media professionals.

Although state broadcasting persists dominating the airwaves in most countries, independent and pluralistic media in Africa are here to stay, despite the many challenges. And that may be the guarantee of the growth and strengthening of democracy in Africa.

AFRICA at 50

African women's long walk to equality

Some gains, but an uphill climb still looms

By L. Muthoni Wanyeki

Women in Madagascar benefit from a micro-finance programme. African women's movements are focusing not only on women's access to resources but also on their control over resources.

Africa's political independence was accompanied by a clarion call to eradicate poverty, illiteracy and disease. Fifty years after the end of colonialism, the question is: To what extent has the promise of that call been realized for African women? There is no doubt that African women's long walk to freedom has yielded some results, however painfully and slowly.

The African Union (AU) now has a legally binding protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women. The protocol spells out clearly women's rights to equality and non-discrimination in a number of areas. It has been ratified by a growing number of African states, can be used in civil law proceedings and is being codified into domestic common law. The AU has also issued a Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, under which member states are supposed to regularly report on progress.

The protocol and declaration both reflect and reinforce developments at the national level. Many African states have moved to enhance constitutional protections for African women – particularly in the area of women's rights and equality. And the last two decades have seen the emergence of legislation to address violence against women, including sexual violence.

Political representation

These developments have been accompanied by improvements in African women's political representation. The AU adopted, from its inception, a 50 per cent quota for women's representation, which is reflected in the composition of the AU Commission.

Again, this standard reflects and reinforces efforts to enhance women's representation at the national level. South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda have reached the 30 per cent benchmark for their legislatures. Rwanda has gone further – with 50 per cent representation, it has one of the best in the world. A few countries, including Nigeria, have seen women assume non-traditional ministerial portfolios, in defence and finance, for example. And Liberia has made history ("herstory") by becoming the first African country to elect into office a female head of state, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Progress is evident, particularly in countries that have electoral systems based on or incorporating proportional representation. However, enhanced women's representation has been harder to achieve in first-past-the-post electoral systems.

Even where there has been progress, the question is whether increased representation of women is catalyzing action by the executives and legislatures in favour of gender equality. That question arises because the battle for women's representation is not only demographic (with political representation as an end) but also for gender equality (with political representation as a means).

Put another way, there has been a shift in the focus and strategy of the African women's movement over the last two decades, from emphasizing capacity-building to improve African women's *access* to resources to emphasizing decision making to enhance African women's *control* over resources. This shift was made possible by real gains resulting from the capacity-building approach.

Education, poverty, health

These gains are most evident in African women's education. Girls and boys are now at par with respect to primary school enrolment. Efforts to get girls into school have been accompanied by efforts to keep them in school and to promote role models by developing gender-responsive curricula. Gender gaps are also narrowing in secondary education. The real challenge now lies at the university level, both in the enrolment figures and in curricula to benefit young women. So much for the "illiteracy" element of the African independence clarion call.

Gains for women are harder to see in that call's "poverty" element, however. It is true that since independence investments in micro-credit and micro-enterprises for women have improved their individual livelihoods – and therefore those of their families. Since African women have proved that they are good lending risks, micro-credit is now being offered not just by development and micro-finance institutions, but also by commercial financial institutions.

Yet there was a critique of such investments, especially in the decade of the 1980s when governments withdrew from social service delivery as a result of structural adjustment programmes. Under those circumstances, such investments essentially enabled redistribution among the impoverished, rather than at a larger level, from the rich to the poor.

The end of that era thus saw a new focus on gender budgeting: looking at where national budget allocations and expenditures could enhance women's status in the economy. Unsurprisingly, this approach has led African governments back towards public investments in social services.

It is now agreed, for example, that the benchmark for public investments in health in Africa is 15 per cent. The African women's movement has called in particular for more to be directed towards reproductive and sexual health and rights. These areas are of critical concern to women, given the impact of HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality and violence against women, particularly in conflict areas. They are also of concern since African women's continued lack of autonomy and choice over reproduction and sexuality lie at the heart of so much suffering. So much for the "disease" element of the independence call.

Where next?

Where to over the next 50 years, then? In light of the experience so far, the African women's movement will be focusing not just on political representation, but also on the meaning of that representation for advancing gender equality and women's human rights. And given recent retreats in Africa (such as the rise of the constitutional coup and "negotiated democracy"), the women's movement will also be focusing on democracy, peace and security more broadly – that is, on the nature of the political system itself and not just on the means of getting into that system.

Economically, women will continue to focus on the macro-level, but in a deeper sense. What has emerged from gender budgeting efforts is the need to actually track budgetary expenditures, not just getting information about allocations.

It is also necessary to concentrate on the macro-economic framework for fiscal and monetary policies, especially in the context of stabilization programmes in response to the recent economic shocks. Previously that framework was assumed to be gender-neutral, but it clearly can have gendered consequences. This problem must be addressed to ensure that Africa's growth will enhance women's livelihoods.

> The upsurge of conservative identity politics constrains and dangerously limits women's human rights."

Finally, the women's movement will be focusing on reproductive and sexual health and rights. The battle over choice (including over gender identity and sexual orientation) is now an open one in many African countries. It is no longer couched politely in demographic or health terms.

The upsurge of conservative identity politics (in both ethnic and religious terms) is fuelling conflict on the continent. It constrains and dangerously limits women's human rights, including reproductive and sexual rights. Such notions are not harmless – they have grave consequences for women's autonomy, choice and bodily integrity. They therefore must be challenged.

African women's long walk to freedom has only just begun.

AFRICA at 50

A 'wind of change' that transformed the continent

Year of independence promoted African freedom struggles

By Michael Fleshman

When UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan addressed the whites-only South African parliament in February 1960, he could not have known that his speech would still be studied by historians years later. But that was the year 17 African countries achieved their independence, with many others soon to follow. His words were prophetic: "The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it." Those remarks would come to be seen as the epitaph of European colonialism in Africa and the harbinger of an African nationalism sweeping irresistibly from the north.

In fact, much of the speech was devoted to assuring South Africa's white minority rulers that they remained part of the Western democratic world despite their formal embrace of the apartheid system of legalized racism a decade earlier. And the massacre of 69 peaceful black protesters by the South African police in Sharpeville a few weeks after Mr. Macmillan's remarks was a brutal reminder that the arrival of majority rule in territories with European settler populations would be neither quick nor amicable.

The dramatic events of 1960 would have a far-reaching effect on Africa for decades to come — unifying the newly independent states around a common commitment to self-determination, and giving moral purpose and political direction to African foreign and regional policy.

By the end of the long campaign against apartheid and colonialism in 1994, Africa's struggle had gone global. The region had successfully engaged the sympathies of millions of people around the world, isolated and discredited white minority rule, and mobilized significant political and diplomatic support through the United Nations and other international bodies.

Ghana, the first 'liberated zone'

For the early African nationalists, support for full decolonization was both a moral imperative and a practical necessity. In 1945 the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester,

A rally in Cape Verde with portraits of Amilcar Cabral and Aristides Pereira, leaders of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde against Portuguese colonial rule.

England, whose delegates included the future presidents of Ghana, Kenya and Malawi and intellectuals and activists from throughout the African diaspora, demanded the immediate end of colonialism.

It was Ghana's independence in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah that is most widely seen as the beginning of the African decolonization campaign. Mr. Nkrumah, a noted pan-African activist, committed the new nation to assisting other anti-colonial movements in his Independence Day speech. He declared, "Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent."

Julius Nyerere, the Tanzanian anti-colonial theoretician who would lead his own country to independence in 1961, described that historic day in Accra as "the beginning of the end of colonialism for the whole of Africa," in a speech at Ghana's 40th independence anniversary in 1997. "Ghana was the beginning, our first liberated zone," he said. "But Ghana was more than just the beginning. Ghana inspired and deliberately spearheaded the independence struggle of the rest of Africa."

In 1958 Ghana hosted a meeting of independent African states, including Ethiopia, Morocco, Egypt and Sudan, followed by a conference of anti-colonial movements from across the continent. Those events would help lay the groundwork for the launch five years later of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its liberation committee.

Africa at war

By the time the OAU was established on 25 May 1963, the number of independent African countries stood at 32, and the principle of self-determination and majority rule was entrenched in the organization's charter, which pledged its members "to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa."

Voting in the November 1989 election to a constituent assembly in Namibia, as the territory moved towards independence from South African rule the following year.

For most of the remaining colonies independence would come via negotiations with the departing European powers. That would not be the case, however, in the Portuguese colonies — Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola and Mozambique — or in the self-governing white-ruled territories, the breakaway UK colony of Rhodesia, South Africa and the UN trust territory of Namibia, which was then under South African control. In most of those countries the independence movements would be forced to take up arms.

African support for armed resistance commenced well before the founding of the OAU. Amilcar Cabral, the head of the liberation movement in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, for example, issued his declaration of war against Portugal from Conakry, the capital of independent Guinea, in 1961. OAU support would prove critical for the insurgents as the fighting escalated, and as competition for influence and allies in Africa intensified among the superpowers. Here again the armed movements would get vital support from independent Africa, now channelled through the OAU's Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa.

Headquartered in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the liberation committee, as it was known, became the primary conduit for aid to the anti-colonial movements, including arms and training from socialist countries and rear bases and support from African states. Those were dangerous times. Tanzania and Zambia opened training and base camps for the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) guerrillas in 1964, drawing retaliatory attacks from Portuguese forces into their territories. Guerrillas from Nelson Mandela's African National Congress would be granted military facilities in those countries the following year, making them targets for South African attacks as well. Frelimo leader Eduardo Mondlane was killed by a Portuguese parcel bomb in Dar es Salaam in 1969.

On the front line

In a memoir of the time, Tanzanian journalist Godfrey Mwakikagile described Dar es Salaam during the 1960s and 1970s as "the epicentre of seismic activity on the African political landscape and beyond" and "a haven and an incubator for activists and revolutionaries from around the world," because of the presence of

At an anti-apartheid rally in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1985. Independent Africa was a strong source of support for the struggle against white minority rule. UN photo

the liberation movements and their supporters.

The military coup that overthrew the Portuguese government in 1974 brought an unexpectedly quick end to Portuguese colonialism in Africa, and changed the strategic balance in the region. With Zimbabwean guerrillas now operating across the long border with independent Mozambique, and its principal ally South Africa under mounting international economic and political pressure over its apartheid policies, the Rhodesian authorities had little choice but to negotiate the terms of independence. Those talks, held at Lancaster House in the UK, were greatly aided by a regional grouping of African countries: Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia, known as the Front Line States.

Formed in 1976, the Front Line States maintained military and diplomatic pressure on the white minority regimes to accept the principle of majority rule. At the same time the front line presidents successfully demanded that Zimbabwe's divided anti-colonial movement negotiate as a united front and accept some unpalatable compromises in order to reach a settlement. As a result, Zimbabwe became Africa's 51st independent country on 18 April 1980 and the sixth front line state.

South Africa responded to the loss of its Portuguese and Rhodesian allies with stepped-up repression at home and a "total strategy" of military and economic destabilization against its independent neighbours. With a deadly mix of cross border attacks, support for armed proxy groups and economic coercion, the strategy inflicted tens of billions of dollars in damage on the region's fragile infrastructure. As many as 100,000 lives are estimated to have been lost in Mozambique alone as a result of destabilization, both directly and indirectly.

From destabilization to democracy

The Front Line States responded to South Africa's new strategy with the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, a regional economic federation intended to lessen economic dependence on South Africa. The body would lay the groundwork for the post-apartheid Southern African Development Community (SADC) 12 years later.

Militarily, OAU political support allowed the Angolan government to call in Cuban forces to help repel a major South African invasion of the country — a defeat that permanently shifted the military balance against the regime in Pretoria. With powerful Angolan and international forces near the Namibian border, South Africa agreed to implement the long-stalled UN decolonization plan for the territory. Namibia became independent on 21 March 1990 under the leadership of Sam Nujoma, a founder of the country's anti-colonial movement SWAPO.

The failure of South Africa's regional strategy and the steady escalation of mass protests at home led to the removal of the hard-line South African president, Pieter W. Botha, in 1989. His replacement, F.W. de Klerk, released Nelson Mandela from prison the following year and unbanned the exiled anti-apartheid groups. Their negotiations eventually led to the end of apartheid on 10 May 1994 when Mr Mandela became South Africa's first democratically elected president. It was, as Mr. Mandela then noted, "a common victory for justice, for peace, for human dignity" and an historic vindication of the principles and priorities of Africa's original anti-colonial leaders.

At the launch of the African Union in 2002, the assembled heads of state noted that nowhere had the OAU "proved more decisive than in the African struggle for decolonization." Through the liberation committee, they declared, "the continent worked and spoke as one with undivided determination in forging an international consensus in support of the liberation struggle."

Fifty years on, the "wind of change" blows across a transformed continent. A new generation, born independent, confronts the continuing challenges of forging unity, building democracy and enabling development. The struggle continues.

AFRICA 50

Visions of independence, then and now

FIFTY YEARS AGO, INDEPENDENT AFRICA'S first generation of leaders had particular visions of where their countries were coming from, and where they were going. The assessments of today's African leaders, personalities and analysts are varied but they are still looking for ways to achieve a better future. Following are just some excerpts from a few of the many African voices on the theme of independence.

THE EARLY YEARS

'Dawn of a new era'

Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, 23 September 1960, at the UN General Assembly in New York.

One cardinal fact of our time is the momentous impact of Africa's awakening upon the modern world. The flowing tide of African nationalism sweeps everything before it and constitutes a challenge to the colonial powers to make a just restitution for the years of injustice and crime committed against our continent....

Kwame Nkrumah speaking before the United Nations in 1961.

UN Photo / Yutaka Nagata

For years, Africa has been the footstool of colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and degradation. From the north to the south, from the east to the west, her sons languished in the chains of slavery and humiliation, and Africa's exploiters and self-appointed controllers of her destiny strode across our land with incredible inhumanity without mercy, without shame, and without honour. Those days are gone and gone forever, and now I, an African, stand before this august Assembly of the United Nations and speak with a voice of peace and freedom, proclaiming to the world the dawn of a new era....

I look upon the United Nations as the only organization that holds out any hope for the future of mankind.... The United Nations must therefore face up to its responsibilities, and ask those who would bury their heads like the proverbial ostrich in their imperialist sands, to pull their heads out and look at the blazing African sun now travelling across the sky of Africa's redemption. The United Nations must call upon all nations that have colonies in Africa to grant complete independence to the territories still under their control.... This is a new day in Africa and as I speak now, thirteen new African nations have taken their seats this year in this august Assembly as independent sovereign states.... There are now twenty-two of us in this Assembly and there are yet more to come.

'Hard work from every citizen'

Jomo Kenyatta, first president of Kenya, 27 May 1963, after he won elections and months before independence.

On this momentous day, which set Kenya on the final stage before independence, I ask the cooperation of every man and woman in this land to help build a new nation.

We aim to create a fair society, where no citizen need suffer in sickness because he cannot pay for treatment. We believe that no child should go without education merely because his family is poor. It will be the government intention to do away with the terrible poverty of so many of our people.

The United Nations must call upon all nations that have colonies in Africa to grant complete independence."

—Kwame Nkrumah

We do not expect to do all this from foreign charity. We are not going to compromise our independence by begging for assistance. The government will make it clear that our progress, our hope, our ambitions will only be fulfilled if we have hard work from every citizen.

'Honoured and humbled'

Edward Frederick Mutesa II, first president of Uganda, 9 October 1962 independence address.

I feel both honoured and humbled ... because I have lived till this day when the British have relinquished power into our hands, after being under their protection for a period of 68 years [as a "protectorate" of Britain].

Now that we are independent, I appeal to you all to work with all your might in whatever you shall do, so as to bring glory to both our kingdoms and the state of Uganda. Let us not allow our differences in nations, religion and colour to be a divisive factor among our people.

'Reorient the entire colonial heritage'

Ahmed Sékou Touré, first president of Guinea, 26 August 1958

We prefer poverty in freedom to opulence in slavery....

We do not confuse the joys of independence with separation from France, to which we intend to remain tied and with which we want to collaborate in building up our common riches....

Beyond a simple feeling of revolt, we are resolute and conscious participants in the political evolution of black Africa, a basic condition to reorient the entire colonial heritage towards and for the African peoples.

Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta, addressing a mass rally in 1965.

Bill Tarbuck

'We want to remain French'

Philibert Tsiranana, first president of Madagascar, speaking before the French National Assembly, 29 May 1958.

We think it is better to have a well-prepared independence, since the anticipated political independence will lead us to the worst dependence possible, economic dependence. We will continue to have confidence in France and count on the French genius to find, when the time comes, a formula similar to that of the British Commonwealth. We Malagasies would never want to separate from France. We are of the French culture, and we want to remain French.

'Your suffering has not been in vain'

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, first president of Côte d'Ivoire, 7 August 1960 independence address.

People of my country, let your joy burst forth. There is no other people that deserves its joy more. More than the others, you have long suffered in patience. But your suffering has not been in vain. You have struggled, but not uselessly, since today you know victory. The need for dignity that you carry within yourselves has finally been satisfied. You are free and with pride join the great family of nations.

'Independence was conquered through struggle'

Patrice Lumumba, prime minister of the Congo, 30 June 1960, independence address.

Even though this independence for the Congo is being proclaimed today in agreement with Belgium, a country with which we deal as equals, no Congolese worthy of that name can ever forget that independence was conquered through struggle, a daily struggle, a fierce and idealist struggle,

a struggle in which we spared neither our energy, nor our hardship, nor our suffering, nor our blood....

Because of what we have gone through during 80 years of a colonial regime, our wounds are still too fresh and painful for us to chase them from our memories. We have known hard labour for which we were paid salaries that could not properly feed us, nor dress or house us decently, nor raise our dear children. We have been mocked, insulted and struck morning, noon and night because we are [black]....

Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (left) at the United Nations in July 1960, with his delegate to the UN, Thomas Kanza © UN Photo/HB

The Republic of the Congo has been proclaimed and our dear country is now in the hands of its own children. Together, my brothers and sisters, we will begin a new struggle, a magnificent struggle that will lead our country to peace, prosperity and greatness. We will together establish social justice and ensure that everyone receives just pay for their labour.

We will show the world what the black man can do when he works in freedom, and we will make the Congo a radiant centre for all of Africa. We will be attentive so that the soil of our homeland really benefits its children. We will review all the old laws and make new ones that are just and noble. We will end the suppression of free thinking and ensure that all citizens can freely enjoy the fundamental freedoms outlined in the [Universal] Declaration of Human Rights....

THE VIEW FROM TODAY

'Deep down, there is an Africa of hope'

Ka Mana, Congolese philosopher, in an opinion article on the DRC's 50th anniversary in the 14 May 2010 edition of the Kinshasa daily *Le Potentiel*.

Neither in the economic realm, nor in the political realm, nor the social realm, nor even in the realm of true cultural liberation is there anything of real significance visible 50 years after independence....

Once that is said, it must be immediately added that only a superficial reading of the African situation would lead us to believe that Africa is lost. Deep down, there is an Africa of hope that has been built over the last five decades....

Africa is being reborn and revived at the grassroots, despite the surface signs that would make it seem that the continent is dying.... The real balance sheet of independence is neither failure nor success, but success in the failure and failure in the success.

'If Africans want democracy, they must pay the price'

Achille Mbembe, Cameroonian scholar, in an article on Africa's 50th anniversary published in April in *Le Messager* and other publications.

As long as the logic of extraction and predation that characterizes the political economy of primary commodities in Africa has not been broken, and with it the existing modes of exploitation of Africa's sub-soil, we will not go far....

What needs to happen is a kind of continental "New Deal" collectively negotiated among the different Africa governments and international powers, a "New Deal" favouring democracy and economic progress that would complete and finally close for everyone that chapter of decolonization.

If Africans want democracy, they must pay the price. No one else will pay it for them. Nor can they get it on credit. They will nevertheless need the support of the new networks of international solidarity, a grand moral coalition beyond states, a coalition of all those who believe that without Africa, our world will

Asha-Rose Migiro, UN deputy secretary-general: "We cannot turn a blind eye to corruption, nepotism or tyranny." [illegible]

certainly be poorer in spirit and humanity.

'Rapid progress is possible'

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, 19 May 2010, at the closing of the "Africa 21" conference on Africa's 50th anniversary, in Yaounde, Cameroon.

The change we have seen in our lifetimes has been enormous. I remember well how I witnessed Ghana's independence as a 19-year-old student beaming with hope. Fifty years later, many of the hopes I harboured that day in Accra have been realized....

The last decade, in particular, has been one of remarkable progress. Unnecessary and cruel wars have come to an end. Increases in trade, domestic and foreign investments have fuelled impressive economic growth rates. New partners are being found, democracy and human rights have taken root, governance has improved, civil society has been empowered, an agricultural revolution is beginning to take hold and opportunities have been extended to ever larger segments of the population....

The challenges before us are great.... But the many success stories of the last 50 years have proven that rapid progress is possible — even in the most difficult circumstances....

'We must honestly assess the realities'

Asha-Rose Migiro, UN deputy secretary-general, 18 May 2010, at the opening of the "Africa 21" conference on Africa's 50th anniversary, in Yaounde, Cameroon.

As we celebrate Africa's achievements, opportunities and potential, we must also honestly address the realities and challenges that confront the continent. We cannot turn a blind eye to corruption, nepotism or tyranny. We cannot allow the will of the people to be thwarted by electoral fraud, unconstitutional changes of government or manipulations of the law to keep vested interests in power. Peace and sustainable development need to be built on the firm bedrock of good governance.

The good news, friends, is that much is already being done — through NEPAD, through the AU's peer review mechanism, through policy reforms and through mobilizing domestic resources.

The bad news is that much remains to be done and time is not on our side. The needs of hundreds of millions of young, vibrant Africans cry out for immediate attention.

'The struggle for independence is economic'

Abdoulaye Wade, president of Senegal, 4 April 2010, Independence Day address.

In comparing our country to some of those in Asia that were at the same level as we at independence in 1960, we notice that they have gone much faster than we have. We must reflect on this to understand why. The struggle for liberation is therefore not finished. It presents itself today in economic terms and will be won on the development front....

With the 50th anniversary of our independence, we have concluded a symbolic stage in the history of our country, in order to now turn to a new task that will take us to the 100th anniversary. And our own pace will determine the rhythm of Senegal's march towards that 100-year mark....

Together, we must clearly understand that prolonged economic dependence will ultimately erode our political independence.

> We are resolute and conscious participants in the political evolution of black Africa."
>
> —Patrice Lumumba

'Young Africans can change the world'

Ali Bongo, president of Gabon, 18 May 2010, at the opening of the "Africa 21" conference on Africa's 50th anniversary, in Yaoundé, Cameroon

What visions of Africa do young Africans have? How do they see development initiatives? How can they be integrated into the new development challenges?...

We are entrusted with the aspirations of our citizens, and responsible for political stability and social cohesion. It is our duty to not leave them on the side of the road, at risk of falling into reprehensible behaviours....

The hard and true reality is that Africa has not invested enough in its human capital to benefit from the capital represented by its youthful population. In absolute terms, Africa has not invested enough simultaneously in ICT, health, education, transport, telecommunications, affordable housing, water, sanitation, etc. The responsibility for that is multiple and shared. It rests with administrations that have conceived and implemented uncoordinated policies and programmes, without any impact on the realities and specific needs of this youth. It is also because of them that qualified young professionals prefer to take their talents abroad rather than serve their homeland, making our countries nurseries of talent for the Western countries....

More than in the past, the progress desired by our African youths – that is, our leaders of the future – must be at the heart of our African government programmes....

For my part, I am convinced that young Africans can change the world, and must change the world.... The youth of Africa have such great needs that their advice and suggestions should be taken into account by public officials.

The progress desired by our African youths must be at the heart of our African government programmes."

—Ali Bongo

'The work begun by our elders has not ended'

Joseph Kabila, president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 30 June 2010, Independence Day address

The 50th is not an ordinary anniversary. It is a singular moment for evaluation, with an eye towards a new departure.

Where are we today, 50 years after 30 June 1960? It is undeniable that we have experienced some remarkable victories. Notably:

- The preservation of national unity and territorial integrity.
- The reestablishment of peace within the country, and with our neighbours.
- National reconciliation.
- The installation of multiparty democracy and trade union pluralism.
- The liberalization of the media and the economy.
- A consensual transition that allowed free, transparent and democratic elections.
- A democracy that is certainly young, but nevertheless real and vibrant.

It is equally undeniable that we have known regrettable failures, especially in the areas of development, social progress and human rights. As a nation and a people, we are, while to varying degrees, collectively responsible for this relative shortfall in performance....

My dear compatriots, freedom, democracy and development are continual quests. The work begun by our elders has not ended. We thus have many challenges to take up.

Part of a large crowd in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, this 30 June, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the country's independence

UN Photo / Evan Schneider

Ending corruption

from page 9

GK The financial crisis was a wake-up call to many. It has driven home the message that long-term value creation and short-term profit maximization are not necessarily the same. The heightened legal scrutiny, whether it is of tax evasion, the abuse of power or corruption, is most welcome. Having a clean finance sector that is not a hand maiden for the abuse of power is of critical importance.

AR **In looking at anti-corruption initiatives in Africa, one often finds that civil society organizations and the media have played key roles. Do you find that it is easier to engage companies in countries where there already have been open discussions about corruption?**

GK The notion of transparency and the engagement of different actors is very important. The deeper meaning of fighting corruption is transparency. The more open societies are and the more information flows are supported, the easier it is for this anti-corruption agenda to be taken up.

AR **How does the Global Compact's anti-corruption agenda relate to its other goals?**

GK Our 10th principle is our most fundamental one, because at its core it means good governance at the corporate level. You cannot achieve clean environmental performance, you cannot achieve good human rights respect if you do not have a clear notion of transparency and disclosure, and clear rules of the game under an ethical framework. It is very fundamental.

On anti-corruption, I am very optimistic that a growing number of companies are embracing this agenda. Not because they are worried that they may be caught and found not to be in compliance. But rather because being ethical does pay off.

Malawi businesses act together

Since the ouster of Malawi's long-time autocratic president and the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1994, various civil society organizations and the media have been able to speak out openly about the need to combat widespread corruption in the country. Both elected presidents since then declared the reduction of corruption to be a major goal. Most recently, in late 2009, President Bingu wa Mutharika announced a crackdown on corruption within his own ruling party, and the country's Anti-Corruption Bureau has launched investigations of several party leaders and cabinet ministers.

This has created a favourable environment for seeking to engage Malawi's business community more actively in the fight against corruption, Olajobi Makinwa, who heads the UN Global Compact's anti-corruption work, told *Africa Renewal*. "In the case of Malawi, anti-corruption action would not have been possible few years ago," she said. But because the Global Compact could work with a local group, it was able to make some notable headway.

In 2005, the Global Compact's network in Malawi joined with the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship to organize a series of business-sponsored roundtables. This led to a Leaders Forum on Building Alliances to Eliminate Corruption, wholly funded by the corporate sector but bringing together leaders from government (including President Mutharika), private companies, civil society, the media and donor organizations. It created an anti-corruption task force, which in 2006 developed a Business Code of Conduct for Combating Corruption.

"Wherever we have a space for civil society organization," explains Ms. Makinwa, "we have been able to build on that space, working with civil society, the business sector and the government."

NEWS

AIDS breakthrough offers hope for vaccine

Scientists at the US government's National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced a discovery in early July that could lead to the world's first effective vaccine against infection by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The researchers reported that they had identified two antibodies — blood proteins that attack viruses in the body — that prevent the virus from infecting other cells.

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, described the discoveries as "exciting advances that will accelerate our efforts to find a preventive HIV vaccine for global use." The antibodies, discovered in a single person infected with HIV, attach themselves to a vulnerable spot on the surface of the virus, which attacks the body's natural defences against infection. The antibodies render HIV harmless, and are effective against 91 per cent of the known strains of the rapidly mutating virus.

Dr. Gary Nabel, the head of the NIH research team, cautioned however that a vaccine is still years away, if it proves possible to create at all. "We're going to be at this for awhile," he told *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper. "It will require work."

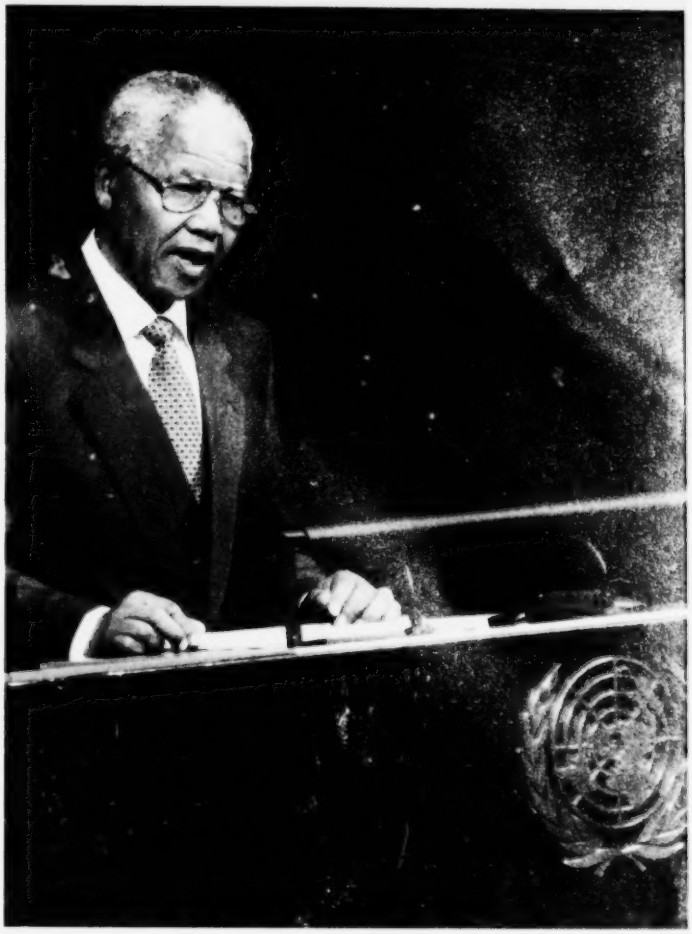
Africa Watch

World honours Nelson Mandela

The world marked the first Nelson Mandela International Day commemoration on 18 July with films, lectures, concerts and charitable activities in dozens of countries and communities. At United Nations headquarters in New York an audience of about 600 attended a 15 July screening of the documentary *Nelson Mandela: Son of Africa, Father of a Nation*, which was introduced by the producers, Jonathan Demme and Peter Saraf. The following day, the General Assembly devoted an informal meeting to the South African leader. The president of the assembly, Ali Treki, described Mr. Mandela as an "international hero" for his role in ending apartheid. The General Assembly's decision to establish Nelson Mandela International Day, he said, "is a call to action to make the world a better place, one day at a time."

In Israel, members of the African community and human and civil rights activists gathered in Tel Aviv for an evening of music, video presentations and speeches, while students and teachers at the Richmond Vale Academy on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines marked the day with lectures, musical performances, sporting events and community service activities, among many other commemorative events in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

In South Africa, the day was marked by a call for 67 minutes of charitable action for the needy — one minute for every year of Mr. Mandela's service to others. The Nelson Mandela Foundation (www.nelsonmandela.org) reported that activities ranged from feeding the homeless to repairing and cleaning schools in poor communities. Mr. Mandela was reported to have spent the day, his 92nd birthday, at his home surrounded by his family and children from his ancestral village.



Nelson Mandela speaking at the UN General Assembly in 1994, shortly after his historic election as president of South Africa in the country's first democratic and multiracial election.

UN Photo / E. Sebekwde

Crusading journalist killed in car accident

A pioneering Cameroonian journalist and media advocate, Pius Njawé, was killed in an automobile accident in the US on 12 July. He was 53 years old. Mr. Njawé was the publisher of Cameroon's leading independent newspaper, *Le Messager*, which he founded in 1979 at age 22, and was a tireless champion of media rights in Africa.

He was in the US to attend a pro-democracy meeting in Washington, according to press reports. His defence of press freedom and resistance to censorship saw him arrested dozens of times since he began his career in 1972.

"The African media has lost a truly courageous individual whose bravery in the face of government intimidation served as an inspiration for other journalists in similar circumstances across the continent," said International Press Institute Director David Dadge. The organization named him their World Press Freedom Hero in 2000.

Mohamed Keita, the advocacy director for the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, described Mr. Njawé's death as "a great loss to Cameroon's independent press." The committee awarded Mr. Njawé its International Press Freedom Award in 1991.

Congo mission gets new name, mandate

The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) received a new mandate and a new name from the Security Council on 1 July. It is now the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), and its mandate emphasizes "stabilization and peace consolidation." The shift, said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa, "recognizes that progress has been made" in the political and security situation in the country more than a decade after the peacekeepers first arrived. "This must be reflected in a strategic change in UN support," he noted.

The Security Council decision, coming in late May at Mr. Ban's recommendation, continues to permit the mission to use force to protect civilians and UN staff and facilities, but mandates the withdrawal of 2,000 peacekeepers from areas where security has improved. MONUSCO's total authorized strength is comparable to that of MONUC, at over 20,000 solders, police and training personnel, not counting several thousand civilian staff. Insecurity and attacks on civilians remain common in the eastern part of the country despite a number of offensives by UN and government forces.

Mr. Ban was in the DRC to attend the country's 50th anniversary of independence from Belgium, and for discussions with Congolese and regional leaders. Further troop withdrawals, he pledged, would be done in close consultation with the DRC government, and conducted "in a way that does not jeopardize the gains the country has made." In remarks at the unveiling of a plaque honouring the 157 MONUC personnel killed in the field, Mr. Ban affirmed the UN's commitment to help the government "build the stability that the country needs to realize its great potential."

Appointments

The UN Secretary-General has appointed **Valerie Amos**, a national of the UK, as his under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, succeeding in that post Sir John Holmes. Born in Guyana, Ms. Amos has had a long career, among other positions serving as the UK's Africa minister from 1997 to 2003 and as the European Union's special representative to the African Union. Baroness Amos has also been leader of the House of Lords, chair of the UK's Royal Africa Society and a secretary of state for international development. In the latter role, she was involved in negotiations on conflict and post-conflict situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Liberia and other parts of the world. At the time of her appointment, she was serving as high commissioner to Australia.

Tayé-Brook Zerihoun of Ethiopia has been named UN assistant secretary-general for political affairs at the UN in New York, replacing Haile Menkerios of South Africa who was reassigned as the top UN official in Sudan. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Zerihoun had a long UN career, working variously on issues such as decolonization, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. He was the acting special representative of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in 2006-2007, and was previously a mediator in the Darfur peace talks.

Augustine P. Mahiga of Tanzania has been named by the UN Secretary-General as his special representative for Somalia and head of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS). Prior to this appointment, Mr. Mahiga was Tanzania's permanent representative to the UN. In that capacity, he was actively involved in various UN reform initiatives, as well as in the negotiations that established the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2005. In his new Somalia post, Mr. Mahiga replaces Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah of Mauritania.

The UN Secretary-General has appointed **Youssef Mahmoud** of Tunisia as his special representative for the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), effective 1 June 2010. Mr. Mahmoud arrived in Chad in March to head a UN delegation to discuss with the Chadian government the future of MINURCAT. Prior to this appointment, he served as head of the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB).

Charles Petrie of the UK and France has been named the new head of the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), to replace Youssef Mahmoud. Mr. Petrie will also serve as the UN resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Petrie was the Secretary-General's deputy special representative for Somalia. He has had 20 years of experience with the UN, with particular expertise in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacebuilding and humanitarian and development action.

Africa Agenda

18–20 Aug 2010
Mediating Democracy in Africa
Organized biannually and involving distinguished scholars and individuals from Africa and the rest of the world to examine the impact of the media on democracy. Contact Demoy Alarfo.

18–21 Aug 2010
Biodiversity Forum
Organized by the Alliance nationale des consommateur et de l'environnement. Togo. Contact Fabrice Elach.

2–4 Sept 2010
Africa's Green Revolution: Investing in African Agriculture
Organized by the African Green Revolution Forum and bringing together African heads of state, ministers, farmers, private agribusiness firms, financial institutions, NGOs, civil society and scientists. Contact Suzanne O'Leary.

9–11 Sept 2010
Seventh Iberian Congress of African Studies: 50 Years of African Independence
Contact Inês Galvão.

20–22 Sept 2010
High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly
Known as the "MDG Summit," it will focus on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

27–30 Sept 2010
Africa Energy Week
Africa's largest gathering of governments, NGOs and corporate investors on energy, combined with an international exhibition strategic oil and gas conference and environmental forum. Contact Shaun Quinn.

4–6 Oct 2010
US-Africa Private Sector Health Forum
Organized by the Corporate Council on Africa. Contact Elizabeth Bachtiar or Emmanuel Nnaga.

29 Nov–10 Dec 2010
Sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

18–23 July 2010
XVIII International AIDS Conference
One of the largest gatherings on the topic with an estimated 20,000 participants from more than 300 countries.

19–27 July 2010
15th African Union Summit
On the theme of "Maternal, Infant and Child Health and Development in Africa". Contact Rahel Akalework.

Africa Books

New Narratives of Women, Security and Governance in Africa eds. Awino Okech and Funmi Olonisakin (Pambazuka Press, Oxford, UK, 2010) 240 pp. pb £10.95/$

La resolution des conflits frontaliers en Afrique by Abakar Tellimi (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2010) 258 pp. pb €29

Climate Wars: the Fight for Survival as the World Overheats by Gwynne Dyer (Oneworld Publications, London, UK, 2010) 288 pp. pb £12.99

Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa eds. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (James Currey, Abingdon, UK, 2010) 224 pp. hb $90

Les stratégies de lutte contre la pauvreté en Afrique subsaharienne : de l'échec des politiques néolibérales aux alternatives potentielles by Jerrol Ould Mahmoud (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2010) 332 pp. €29.50

Decentralization in Uganda: Explaining Successes and Failures in Local Governance by Lisa M. C. Landsbergh (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, USA, 2010) 308 pp. hb $/£/

Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe by Gerard Prunier (Oxford University Press, Northhampshire, UK, 2010) 376 pp. hb $/£/

Trustee for the Human Community: Ralph J. Bunche, the UN and the Decolonization of Africa eds. Robert A. Hill and Edmund J. Keller (Ohio University Press, Athens, USA, 2010) 304 pp. hb $/£/

Encyclopedia of Africa eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah (Oxford University Press, New York, USA, 2010) 1184 pp. hb £/$

Disarming the Past: Transitional Justice and Ex-Combatants eds. Anna Cutter Patel, Pablo de Greiff and Lars Waldorf (Social Science Research Council, New York, USA, 2010) 286 pp. hb $50

Logiques paysannes et espaces agraires en Afrique by Koffi Attia and Pierre T. Zoungrana (Karthala, Paris, France, 2010) 584 pp. pb €29

African Crises and Social Protest

The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War

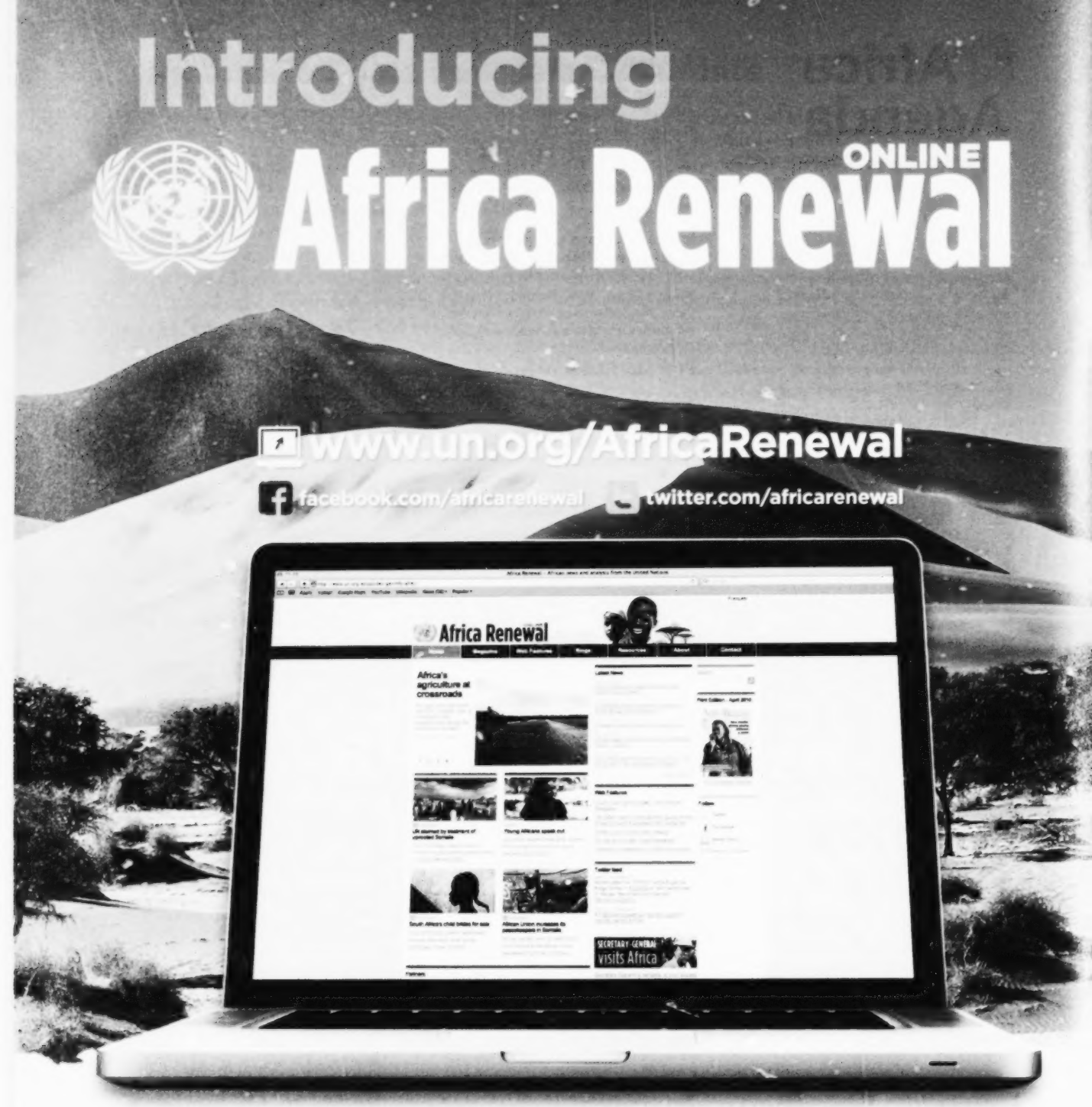
Frontières, espaces de développement partagé

The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality

Démocratie et développement au Congo-Kinshasa

After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan

Echanges et réseaux marchands en Afrique



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